



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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For more information, contact:
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Make Sure Your Private Well is “Well”

Waukesha—When people are healthy, they say they feel well. But there is another type of “well health” that private water well owners need to be concerned with—the health of their well water.

During Public Health Week, April 2-8, 2007, the Waukesha County Environmental Health Division is advising private well owners to check the health of their well by having their water tested for coliform bacteria. While rarely causing sickness themselves, testing for coliform bacteria is an indicator that other bacteria, viruses and parasites may also be present.

If there are infants under six months of age or women of childbearing age drinking the water, it should also be tested for nitrate. Nitrate can cause a serious health condition in infants called “blue baby syndrome”, which has symptoms similar to suffocation. Research has also shown a connection between high nitrate levels in water and birth defects and miscarriages in pregnant women.

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“Clean, safe drinking water is one of the most important elements of good health,” said Paul Tellier, the Environmental Health Division’s Groundwater Program Coordinator. “Testing well water on an annual basis is one of the easiest things a private well owner can do to take care of their health and the health of their loved ones. Our division suggests that well owners test during Public Health Week, but it truly is something that people can do any time of the year.”

By law, municipalities regularly test their drinking water supply to ensure its safety. But with private wells, it is the well owner’s responsibility. According to the State, Wisconsin has approximately 1 million private wells, most of which are not tested for coliform bacteria and other contaminants on the recommended annual basis. Many of these contaminants can cause sickness in people who drink, bathe or cook with the water.

You can obtain water test collection kits from the Environmental Health Division three ways:

- Order by phone for \$22 using Visa/MasterCard by calling (262) 896-8300
- Mail a check for \$22 payable to “Waukesha County” to the address below:
Environmental Health Division
1320 Pewaukee Road, Room 260
Waukesha, WI 53188
- Pick up a kit for \$20, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. at the address above

Public Health Week is sponsored by the American Public Health Association and its state affiliate, the Wisconsin Public Health Association.

For more information about private well water testing, please call Paul Tellier in the Environmental Health Division at (262) 896-8300.

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